

## Mayor's Message

January 2008

When the local newspapers review the year just past, are you ever surprised at all that took place? Each year seems to hold a unique personality, with a blend of good and bad to mark it. I look forward to this time of the year because it is an opportunity to reflect on how our City has continued to evolve. It is also when goals are the focus as we prepare to move forward.

As I work with the Department Heads and staff in the City, we examine not only where we have been, but where we are going and what it will take to get there. Recently I had a conversation with a resident who expressed his amazement at the dramatic changes he has seen in our City. He went on to express concern that the City seemed to be undertaking some expensive projects. I may have surprised him when I explained that I wished the funds had been available years earlier to spend on long term infrastructure. You will understand what I meant if you have watched the prices escalate in the housing market. If you were planning to spend \$250,000 for a home a year or two ago, you would have been able to purchase a larger home than you would get for that same amount today.

The same principle is true with City projects. Over the years we have made commitments to having our basic services upgraded and necessary infrastructure in place. Some examples include the sewer trunk line for the west side of the City, new water lines as part of road projects, power system upgrades from 46 KV to 138 KV, and storm drain improvements. The great thing about these projects is that they were built when construction costs were lower and will serve us for several decades. Roads need to be maintained more often, so it is an ongoing part of our budget focus. I shared with this gentleman, as we talked, my mantra regarding infrastructure, "Today's problems left unaddressed, will surely become tomorrow's catastrophes." As we discussed the direction of the City, he agreed that proactive decisions will continue to make our City a place he will be confident to live in and enjoy along with his neighbors.

Two new fire stations will soon be in place. The station on Vine Street and approximately 1000 East is moving along quickly and this year ground will be broken for the one at 5900 South and 500 West. These stations are being built without tax increases or bonding, but as a result of the strong economy we are enjoying in our State and City. They will provide vital infrastructure in allowing the public safety services to be what we all expect.

I am hopeful that 2008 will bring a year of peace and prosperity to all of us. As we watch it unfold together, may you enjoy living in our City. I think it is an excellent place to call home.